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Review

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### Model Building for Decision Analysis

B. H. P. RIVETT

Wiley, U.K. 1980. 172 pp. £9.85

ISBN 0 471 27654 5

In the preface to his book, Professor Rivett states that it is a development of his earlier book, published in 1972, entitled *Principles of Model Building*. I feel, however, that it would be fairer to say that what we now have is little more than a second edition of the earlier book for if one glances at the contents of the two volumes, they are almost identical and this is borne out by a more detailed examination of the material, page by page. What we find is that the author has incorporated in most chapters a few further thoughts and amplifications, and the only significant new material amounts to a much more general consideration of the role of forecasting (covering such things as social, economic, political, technological and energy forecasts), a discussion of situations involving conflict (games and hypergames) and a brief mention of multi-dimensional scaling as a means of dealing with multiple organisational objectives.

Of these three additions, I found the further material on forecasting by far the most useful giving, as it now does, a nicely rounded discussion of the various issues arising when one attempts forecasting in a number of different environments. This having been said, I found the book as a whole to be readable but disappointing. As was indicated in a review of *Principles of Model Building* (*Opl. Res. Q.* **25**, **3**, 1974), the book still does not really answer the fundamental question of how to creatively approach a problem situation using the various resources (techniques?) that the O.R. man has at his disposal. Despite this however, all the issues discussed in the various chapters are of relevance to the model building process and should be appreciated by any O.R. man before he is let loose on a problem of any importance. To this extent then, the book should be useful background reading for any O.R. scientist or student—but that was the case with *Principles of Model Building*, and surely our thinking about model building has advanced in the eight years spanning the two books by more than the differences between them would tend to indicate.

I have one other major criticism of a rather different nature. The book is littered with minor mistakes and misprints, so much so, that it is almost impossible to believe that the book has ever been seriously proof read. Indeed, a misprint pointed out in the earlier review referred to above is still there (“present work” for “present worth”) and that is by no means the only one which has lain undetected for eight years! It really is inexcusable when in about a page and a half (pages 75, 76), one finds as many as 10 misprints, many of which would cause anyone who was not totally familiar with the subject matter to have to stop and think, if not to create permanent confusion.

Overall then, the book (as with its predecessor) should make interesting reading for anyone, student or practitioner, who has cause to think seriously about the process of O.R. Unfortunately, I feel that I could not recommend anyone who already possesses a copy of *Principles of Model Building* to invest almost £10 in another copy of a not very different book, particularly one which is typographically so bad.

D. G. JOHNSTONE

### Pitfalls of Analysis

G. MAJONE and E. S. QUADE (EDITORS)

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